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ABSTRACT

Techniques for using video tape for teacher observation are described. A form was devised for teachers to use as they observed replaying of tapes of their performance in an actual class situation. The form was divided into three charts. The first chart enabled the teachers to note teacher talk, student talk, and moments of silence or confusion. The second part of the form was used to analyze aspects of direct and indirect verbal behavior. The third part of the analysis was aimed at determining the amount of attention each student in the class received. Samples of the forms are included in this report. (JD)

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VIDEOTAPING CLASSES

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Certainly, the use of video tape for teacher observation is nothing new. However, it had not been used in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at I.U.-Bloomington before 1977. In 1976 I participated in the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages Preconference Workshop entitled "Refining Skills in Supervision." I had an opportunity there to observe first-hand the effective manner in which the workshop's co-ordinators had incorporated the use of video tape in their teacher training program. At the time, I was impressed enough to decide to use video tape in our customary round of spring-semester observations of associate instructors teaching elementary Spanish. In co-operation with the Teaching Resources Center and the Radio and Television Services, arrangements were made to videotape each A.I.'s class.

The procedure used was the following. First, all A.I.'s were told that the taping was going to take place sometime during the semester. We sent a master list of the location of our classes to Radio and TV, along with a list of dates (e.g. exam days) when it would be inappropriate to tape. Arrange-

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ments were made for a camera operator to attend a number of classes and we were informed of their plans a few days in advance so that the A.I.'s involved could be notified of the date on which the taping was to take place. Later, both the supervisor and the individual A.I.'s viewed the tapes, usually at different times.

Research has shown that videotaping is more effective if guidance is given, so I devised a form for both the instructors and myself to fill out. It was based on the Flanders System of Interactional Analysis, but since that system, as originally formulated, requires considerable training for implementation, I modified it so that the instructors could use it with a minimum of instruction. First, that system was broken down into parts, so that the instructor had to concentrate on only one aspect of the teaching process at a time. Secondly, the distinction between direct and indirect teaching verbal behavior, often analyzed in great detail, was included only in a partial manner in the second section of the form. Thirdly, the system was modified to measure a concern specific to the second-language classroom, that is, the relative amounts of English and the target language, in this case Spanish, which were used.

The form which was supplied for use in viewing contained several charts. The first was divided into three major sections: teacher-talk, student-talk, and silence or confusion. Teacher-talk was classified on the chart as occurring in Spanish or English. Likewise, student-talk was subdivided into the categories of English and Spanish with student-talk in Spanish characterized as either choral or individual. The room where the viewing took place was supplied with a fifteen-minute audio tape which played tones at five-second intervals. The viewers played this tape while watching the first fifteen minutes of the class. Each time the tone sounded, they were to place a mark

on the line corresponding to the type of verbal behavior occurring at that precise moment. This procedure and resulting data provided an excellent basis for discussing the amount of Spanish used in the classroom, the proportion of choral and individual response, and the balance between teacher-talk and student-talk. Furthermore, the presence of extended periods of silence opened the discussion to such aspects of teaching as preparation and execution of specific classroom techniques on the basis of observations that the individual involved had made. This, indeed, was an advantage afforded by the video tape that would not have been available had another mode of observation been employed.

The second part of the form was intended to analyze one aspect of direct and indirect verbal behavior. During a ten-to-fifteen minute segment of the class, the instructors recorded on another chart all of the expressions of praise or encouragement that they used - an example of indirect verbal behavior - as well as all of the expressions of criticism - a direct behavior. In addition, they put a mark beside these expressions each time they were repeated. This portion of interaction analysis enabled us to discuss the amount of direct and indirect influence each teacher used and helped individuals to examine such aspects of their classroom behavior as heavy reliance on criticism or the distracting overuse of words or expressions.

The third part of the analysis, one which was not directly derived from the Flanders System, was aimed at determining the amount of attention each student in the class received. The A.I.'s were asked to list the names of all of their students on the form before going to view the video tape. While watching the last fifteen minutes of the class, the teacher's task was to place a mark by the students' names each time one of them spoke. This is one part of the analysis which I, as supervisor, could not perform since I did not know

the majority of the students in these classes. However, this limitation in no way detracted from the effectiveness of the procedure. Frequently, the instructors discovered that they tended to leave below-average students out of the class activities by calling on them less often.

In general, everyone involved in our first experience with videotaping found it worthwhile. Although many were, at first, intimidated by the notion of "being on television", most felt that it was profitable to see themselves in action. This is seemingly one of the great advantages of video tape, for, in addition to the factors that were selected for examination, a number of the teachers discovered frequently repeated personal mannerisms which they felt should be eliminated from their classroom performance. I also received comments to the effect that the video tape helped the instructors to become more aware of the pace of the class, the sequencing of material, and the relative amount of time devoted to any given activity. Furthermore, the procedure added interaction analysis to our system of observation - an element which had not been employed previously. Although this type of instrument can be used by an observer in the classroom without the aid of video tape, some elements of it, particularly the marking of five-second intervals, can be done more comfortably and effectively with video tape. Moreover, there was a favorable reaction to the fact that the tape provides a means of stopping the action in the class to review something that was missed and allows one to view the class more than once if necessary. Aside from these advantages there is also a very positive value involved in the teacher's being able to see certain aspects of his classroom performance for himself rather than simply receiving a report from someone else. In fact, one instructor commented that if "it's there on the tape, you can't deny it!" In this respect, I should add that the more experienced teachers in the group showed greater enthusiasm

for the videotaping procedure than they tend to show for our usual observations. In fact, the desire that we do this more often was expressed.

Not only did the video tape receive good reaction, it also carried with it an added advantage of helping in training new instructors. With the permission of the A.I. involved, one of the tapes was saved and used in our fall orientation program to provide new A.I.'s the opportunity to observe an actual class.

Although I am pleased with the results of our first experience with video tape, the procedure was not entirely problem free. At times technical difficulties produced poor images or required that a class be taped a second time. The logistics of scheduling such a large group were also a bit complicated, and this limited the intended scope of the project. Furthermore, the consensus seemed to be that the camera operators focused too much on the instructor and not enough on the students. When students did appear on the tape, the instructors appreciated being able to see their reactions. This problem, however, is one that can easily be solved in the future by giving more explicit instructions to the camera operators, or by exploring the possibilities of using a wide-angle lens or changing the position of the camera in the classroom. Of course, the presence of the camera does tend to inhibit the students, but so does the presence of an observer. And, while it is true that many instructors were anxious about the idea initially, few of them found it to be as threatening as expected.

In light of the generally favorable reaction from our first attempt, I am inclined to continue to use video tape as part of our observation program. Certainly, I do not consider it to be a substitute for personal observations. The logistics involved in switching totally to video tape for such large numbers of instructors are prohibitive. However, I remain enthusiastic about

its value as a supplement to other types of observations, and I am particularly impressed with its value for more experienced teachers.

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ANALYZING CLASSROOM INTERACTION

I. WHO TALKS?

		No.	Z
Teacher Talk	English		
	Spanish		
Student Talk	English		
	Spanish	Indiv.	
		Choral	
Silence			
Confusion			

II.

A. Positive Reinforcement

Verbal Expressions	No.

Nonverbal Expressions

No.

B. Negative Reinforcement

Verbal Expressions

No.

Nonverbal Expressions

No.

III. Student Participation

Please list your students names below. Watch a 10 to 15 minute segment of your tape and put a check mark beside each student's name each time he/she speaks.

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal black ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or printed text on the page. A small, faint mark is visible near the top center, and a slight shadow is present along the left edge.